



# OESNEWS

## Governor's Office of Emergency Services

---

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

March 28, 2007

### **Contacts:**

Eric Lamoureux  
Carol Singleton  
(916) 845-8400

## **State OES Director Urges Tsunami Preparedness**

SACRAMENTO – The Director of the Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES), Henry Renteria, urged Californians to use today's 43<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the 1964 Alaska earthquake and tsunami as an opportunity to increase their understanding of the tsunami risk that California faces. Mr. Renteria also urged Californians to take actions to reduce their risk of death, injury and property losses.

"Even though the 1964 tsunami was generated by a magnitude-9.2 earthquake more than 1,500 miles away, it caused tremendous damage to Crescent City and other parts of California, resulting in a dozen deaths and \$17 million in damage," said Renteria. "The anniversary of that earthquake and tsunami this month provides Californians an opportunity to learn about tsunamis and how they should prepare themselves and their families if they visit or live along the coast."

Although California isn't affected by tsunamis as often as it is by earthquakes, the state – particularly the North Coast – is susceptible to larger-than-normal waves triggered by earthquakes generated locally as well as thousands of miles away. Scientists believe that Southern California is also at risk for damaging tsunamis generated by distant earthquakes as well as earthquakes and landslides that occur just off the coast.

Last November, a tsunami and resulting wave surge generated by a magnitude-8.4 earthquake off the coast of Japan caused an estimated \$6 million in damage to the boat harbor in Crescent City. While many earthquakes off the coast of California do not result in tsunamis, it is important to be prepared for those that do.

Renteria recommends that residents of low-lying areas along the coast begin preparing by checking with their local office of emergency services to determine their risk and the areas subject to inundation in a tsunami. Californians should also learn the difference between tsunami watches and warnings by visiting the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration's Web site at [www.tsunami.noaa.gov](http://www.tsunami.noaa.gov).

The OES Director said every Californian – not just those who live or work along the coast -- should learn what to do if a tsunami occurs.

"Because we live in a very mobile society, access to the beach, the mountains and the desert isn't limited to those who live and work in those communities," Renteria explained. "Californians can travel to the beach on Monday, the mountains on Tuesday and the desert on Wednesday. I encourage Californians to use this month's anniversary of the 1964 earthquake and tsunami as a chance to learn what they should do if they're at the beach or in an area subject to inundation when a tsunami occurs."

-more-

**Tsunami Preparedness**  
**Press Release**  
**Page 2**

Californians should take cover under a desk or table during the shaking. After the shaking stops, individuals living, working or visiting along the coast should immediately move at least 100 feet above sea level. If severe shaking lasts more than 20 seconds, those people near the coast should move at least 2 miles inland.

Because the waves generated by a tsunami can last for several hours and the first wave isn't necessarily the biggest in the sequence, the OES Director said that it's important that Californians follow the direction of local emergency officials and stay away from coastal areas until they are advised that it's safe to re-enter the area.

Renteria also urged Californians to use the earthquake and tsunami anniversary as an opportunity to update their emergency plans and supply kits.

Plans should include the name and phone number of an out-of-area contact and a place where family members can reunite if they are separated.

Emergency supply kits should include at least a three-day supply of food and drinking water, first aid kits, essential medications, portable flashlights and extra batteries. They also should include either portable battery-operated radios or NOAA Weather Radios.

Additional information about general emergency preparedness is available through the link to the "Get Ready" campaign on the OES Web site at [www.oes.ca.gov](http://www.oes.ca.gov).

# # #